



**Federal Bureau
of Investigation**



**U.S. Attorney's
Office**



**Bureau of Alcohol,
Tobacco, Firearms
and Explosives**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 2, 2006

For Information Contact Public Affairs
WYN HORNBuckle
Telephone: (602) 514-7625
Cell: (602) 525-2681

HUGHES SENTENCED TO OVER 7 YEARS FOR ATTEMPTED PRODUCTION OF RICIN AND MULTIPLE WEAPONS OFFENSES

PHOENIX - Denys Ray Hughes, 59, of Phoenix, Arizona, was sentenced Monday by United States District Court Judge Earl H. Carroll to 87 months in prison for the Attempted Production of a Biological Toxin for Use as a Weapon, and Possession of an Unregistered Destructive Device and Possession of an Unregistered Silencer.

In delivering his sentence, Judge Carroll noted the case was one of the most serious cases to come before him as a judge, and that the evidence at trial overwhelmingly proved Hughes attempted and intended to produce the deadly biological toxin ricin. A federal jury convicted Hughes of the charges on June 30, 2006.

United States Attorney Paul K. Charlton stated, "Hughes was a home grown threat who tried to create a home-made toxin for use as a weapon. We may never know his motive, but his intent was clear. We may begin to see more of these types of cases. It is our hope, therefore, that this prosecution will serve notice on those who live within our borders and would do us harm, that we will hammer them. This successful prosecution would not have been possible without the hard work of investigative agencies, including the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Russell County Sheriff's Department in Kansas and the Vilas County Sheriff's Dept. in Eagle River, Wisconsin."

Special Agent in Charge John E. Lewis, of the Phoenix FBI Division stated, "The FBI is committed to enhance communications, coordination and cooperation between federal, state, and local government agencies. The Hughes investigation is an example of these efforts as the FBI worked with law enforcement agencies outside the State of Arizona, and local law enforcement agencies on the Joint Terrorism Task Force, DEA and ATF. These partnerships will continue to help protect our community from terrorist threats coming from abroad or within our country."

William D. Newell, Special Agent in Charge for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosive (ATF), stated, "This is an example of ATF's continued commitment to the safety and protection of the people of this great country. Today's decision sends a clear message that anyone that wishes to engage in the manufacturing of these deadly biological toxins (ricin) will be dealt with swiftly by ATF and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. ATF is proud of the strong relationships we have with our

-MORE-



**Federal Bureau
of Investigation**



**U.S. Attorney's
Office**



**Bureau of Alcohol,
Tobacco, Firearms
and Explosives**

fellow law enforcement agencies not only in Arizona, but across this nation.”

The evidence at trial showed the defendant grew approximately nine castor bean plants, and cultivated thousands of their seeds, which contain the toxin ricin. Hughes also possessed the necessary precursor materials, as well as written instructions for extracting the toxin. The government also proved at trial that Hughes possessed a destructive device, a pipe bomb, and multiple silencers.

The investigation leading to the guilty verdict was conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, jointly with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Additionally, the Russell County Sheriff's Department in Kansas and the Vilas County Sheriff's Dept. Eagle River, Wisconsin, also assisted on the case. The prosecution was handled by Michael Morrissey, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-05-759-PHX-EHC

RELEASE NUMBER: 2006-199(Hughes)

###